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NICARAGUA/U.S. MACNEIL: In Washington, the Reagan administration won a tactical victory in its battle for more military aid to the CIA-backed rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The Senate Intelligence Committee agreed to let the administration spend \$7 million of the \$21 million it has requested for aid to the contras and to put the other \$14 million into a CIA contingency fund.

EL SALVADOR/
U.S. AID MACNEIL: But tomorrow the administration faces a biggest test, when the Senate Appropriations Committee votes on \$93 million in emergency aid to El Salvador. U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering saw President Reagan today and said U.S. aid to El Salvador has thus far been insufficient. THOMAS PICKERING (U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador): What we have provided in the past has been enough merely to buy a continued stalemate in the changing military situation in El Salvador. Sixty million dollars in a country like El Salvador on an annual basis has been just enough to buy a continued stalemate. The question is, is clearly what kind of assistance is required just to keep Salvador afloat, ah, for the next, ah, for the next period of the fiscal year, to say nothing of the urgent request to try to provide an increase in assistance to do what should have been done years ago and what continues to need to be done as to provide more security. A third of their military force, roughly, has been trained and equipped by the United States after this four years. So there is still a long, long way to go to reach anything like what would be considered to be favorable or helpful, with respect, ah, to the military forces. And a military force that's one-third trained and one-third equipped is basically not a very effective military force. So the, the issue is now, for El Salvador--I can't speak for Central America as a whole--is there, is there sufficient willingness on the part of the Congress,

ah, working with us on this particular issue to provide the assistance necessary, the bare minimum of assistance necessary to get through the election process, an extremely important process, and through the remainder of the year, ah, on the basis of just, you know, a stay-alive kind of assistance.

WOODRUFF: Tomorrow, the administration's request for emergency military aid for El Salvador is on the agenda of two congressional committees, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. To assess congressional reaction to the emergency aid package, we turn to the Senate Majority

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White, Republican Ted Stevens, of Alaska, a member of the Appropriations Committee. From the other side of the political aisle, we have Rep. Gerry Studds, a Democrat from Massachusetts, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Studds, do you think the Congress shares the feeling of the administration that it is vital that El Salvador get this military aid, that it's absolutely critical to the survival of the democracy there? GERRY STUDDS (D-Mass.): This member of Congress does not. And I certainly can't speak for the entire Congress. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see the Senate at least in committee tomorrow begin to grant that request. I hope that they don't. It seems to me that what is happening now is that the imminence of the elections are being seized upon as a pretext by the administration, essentially to stampede the Congress into a healthy bite of the awesome amount of money, some \$311 million in military assistance they've asked for in the next 18 months. There's a tendency, I think, in this city that if a policy does not work, what one ought to do is a great deal more the same thing. This policy is not working. And the administration is asking for lots, lots more of the same thing. I hope, fervently, that the Congress rejects it out of hand.

WOODRUFF: Senator Stevens, do you agree? TED STEVENS (R-Alaska): No, obviously not. The timing is very critical as far as we are concerned. The elections are coming in, in El Salvador. The money the president's asked for is vital really, to see that those, those elections can go on.

WOODRUFF: Now why is that? STEVENS: Well, because of the information we have that there's going to be an attempt to disrupt them, a severe attempt to disrupt them.

WOODRUFF: By whom? STEVENS: It's tied into the Nicaraguan aid, too, I mean the aid to the contras in Nicaragua to stop the flow of arms coming into the rebels in El Salvador. And, and we believe it's absolutely essential to demonstrate once again now, even to the election process itself that the United States is not abandoning the effort to maintain the democracy in Central America.

WOODRUFF: How do you know that there's going to be an attempt to disrupt the elections? How does the administration know that? STEVENS: Well, by intelligence operations. We do have them, you know, and we rely on 'em to a great extent.

WOODRUFF: And why don't you agree with those? Why don't you believe in them? STUDDS: Well, I don't know whether there's going to be an attempt to disrupt the elections or

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not. But what I'm absolutely confident of is not even this administration can spend \$93 million in military aid in the next 10 days to two weeks before those elections. It seems to me, ah, asking a bit much of our, of

our credulity to think that the, the elections themselves will be ah, or the security of the elections will be affected. They're, ah, the question, it seems to me, is not what will happen if military aid is cut off, which is what the president keeps holding in front of us as something of a red flag. The question I think members of Congress and Americans ought to be asking themselves is what will happen if we persist in the inane policy of supporting a government which is fundamentally unworthy of our support and which sooner or later will fall at the hands of its own people.

WOODRUFF: But what about the more immediate question that the, the immediate point that the administration has raised that the Salvadorans are running out of military supplies, medical supplies, ammunition and so forth that's absolutely critical to their continuing their fight?

STUDDS: I haven't the slightest objection to sending medical supplies to those who need it. But that is not the heart of the president's request. He is asking us for over \$300 million in increased military aid. That's almost \$9,000 in bullets alone for every guerrilla that we estimate the government is fighting. It, it makes no sense at all to say that that has to happen in the next 10 days to two weeks.

WOODRUFF: Senator Stevens? STEVENS: That's not the issue. The issue is \$93 million tomorrow. We will try to put that on, on the track tomorrow with Senator Kasten's amendment, as I tried to restore the monies to assure that we have the aid to the contras in Nicaragua. The two are tied together, as far as I'm concerned. And, and I understand what's Gary's saying. How long do you think that the, the countries of, of central Europe would be maintained if we stopped supporting NATO? I mean, we have, ah, we have presence in, in, in the world. And we've got a presence now in Central America. If we don't maintain that presence, that could, in effect, determine the outcome of these elections at a very critical time for this, this government to survive.

WOODRUFF: I don't understand the connection. You, you brought NATO in. What's the connection between NATO and El Salvador? STEVENS: Well, they don't seem to understand that the problem is in, in, in terms of our presence is, is, in Central America, is not as fixed, it's not as heavy, it's not as much a U.S. responsibility as NATO is. Here we're helping people to defend themselves within our own hemisphere. And I find it very strange

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that the members of the other party attack the presidents policies so strenuously in terms of Central America. This is our hemisphere. These people are trying to survive in freedom, and we are not doing the fighting. To hear the people talk you'd think we were doing the fighting. We are giving them military assistance so they can defend freedom in this hemisphere.

WOODRUFF: Congressman Studds? STUDDS: Senator Stevens is a fine man, but that does not make this a fine policy. He says it's linked to the contras, the aid by this administration to the contras in Nicaragua. They aren't talking about attempting to interdict arms flow from Nicaragua to El Salvador, the contras, the leadership of the Somosistas, the revolutions that we are training and supporting and financing, at the request of the president. They're talking about overthrowing the government of Nicaragua. We don't like the government of Nicaragua. But it happens to be illegal to overthrow a government with whom we are not at war. The administration, it seems to me, has got itself in a position where it's financing illegal activities in Nicaragua. It is asking us to finance at enormous expense to the American people an operation in support of a government which does not share the values of this nation at all and which is

doomed. We ought not to be associating ourselves time and again with, with forces like this.

WOODRUFF: What about the human rights issue? If the administration, say were to make some concessions on, on that point, do you think it would help them in getting the money they want? STUDDS: Our struggle, at least in the House side, I'm not sure about the Senate, is to tie some real strings to this aid. If they want military aid, the very least, it seems to me, they can be expected to do is to restrain their own killers. We know who the death squads are led by. And the, and the question is what's going to be done about it. Until something is done about it, it seems to me to be asking more than enough of the American people to support a policy such as this.

WOODRUFF: Senator Stevens? STEVENS: Isn't that strange, so much vehemence over, over that subject, when what happens to civil rights of people in Nicaragua? What happens to civil rights of people who live in El Salvador, who are being attack by arms coming in from Cuba and the Soviet Union through Nicaragua into El Salvador? They don't understand the linkage of a total Central American policy. I, I think the president is right. If we really believe in the Monroe Doctrine, that this hemisphere is important to us, then we've got to move on this aid to help these people to defend themselves. And as far as the

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timing is concerned, it's essential. This election is this month.

WOODRUFF: Do you think if the Congress doesn't give the president the money he wants that he will dip into that discretionary fund that he has referred to, for some of the money? STEVENS: I don't know. I don't think he should have to. And I wouldn't want to cross that bridge. I think it's essential for us to, to, to assert publicly our interest in the preservation of democracy in this hemisphere.

WOODRUFF: What do you think's gonna happen, Congressman Studds? STUDDS: Well, I don't know what's gonna happen. But I gather the next vote will be tomorrow in the House committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee. The administration is asking the Senate committee to attach some \$93 million in more military aid to the government of El Salvador to a bill which has passed the House and gone to the Senate to provide emergency famine relief for starving people in Africa. I think that verges on the obscene. STEVENS: That doesn't verge on the obscene when the House has told us there'll be no more bills. They've stopped our, our regular supplemental. The regular supplemental appropriations bill for '84 has been delayed in the House, so we can't address these subjects. And then they accuse us of being inhuman by holding up this bill in order to put an amendment on it that is just as much an emergency as the aid to Africa.

WOODRUFF: Can either one of you predict, in one word, whether or not the administration's gonna get the money it's asking for? STEVENS: It's gonna get the money tomorrow. STUDDS: He's speaking for the Senate. In the House, my guess is they'll get some but not all, and we'll put some fairly firm conditions on the remainder. I fervently hope that we will.

WOODRUFF: Thank you, Congressman Studds, Senator Stevens, for being with us. Robin?